

JOINT LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFIT EQUITY

MEMBERS

Legislators:

Senator Jeanne Kohl-Welles
Senator Linda Evans Parlette
Representative Steve Conway
Representative Cary Condotta

Labor Representatives:

Joe Crump
David Johnson
Jeff Johnson
Owen Linch

Business Representatives:

Bruce Beckett
Chris Cheney
Jan Gee
Brian Minnich

Employment Security Department Liaison:

Annette Copeland

Legislative Staff:

Chris Cordes, House Office of Program Research
Jill Reinmuth, House Office of Program Research
Jennifer Strus, Senate Committee Services
Jennifer Eberle, House Office of Program Research
Nancy Osmundson, Senate Committee Services

WORKPLAN

Target Dates

Draft recommendations: November 29, 2005

Draft report: December 14, 2005

Final report to the Legislature: January 1, 2006

Background

In 2005 the Legislature enacted EHB 2255 which establishes the Joint Legislative Task Force on Unemployment Insurance Benefit Equity to review the unemployment insurance system, including:

- Whether the benefit structure is equitable;
- Whether the structure fairly accounts for changes in workforce and industry work patterns, including seasonality, and claimant work patterns;
- Whether the tax structure equitably distributes taxes; and
- Whether the trust fund is adequate in the long term.

The Task Force membership includes the following:

- The chair and ranking minority member of the Senate Labor, Commerce & Research & Development Committee;
- The chair and ranking minority member of the House Commerce & Labor Committee;
- Four business representatives, appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and
- Four members representing labor, appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

In addition, the Employment Security Department must maintain a liaison representative, who will be a nonvoting member. The Department will also cooperate with and provide information to the Task Force.

The Task Force must report to the Legislature by January 1, 2006.

Task Force Objectives

In the legislation establishing the Task Force, the Legislature stated two major objectives:

- to manage the unemployment insurance system to take into account the goal of reducing costs to foster a competitive business climate; and
- to adjust unemployment benefits to make reasonable improvements in benefit equity.

Tentative Meeting Dates/Agendas

June 29, 2005 (Wednesday), 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., Olympia

Work Session:

- Task Force organization
- Overview of unemployment insurance claim and tax process
- Overview of Employment Security Department's model for UI system analysis

July 26, 2005 (Tuesday), 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Olympia

Work Session:

- Continue review and approval of Employment Security Department's model for UI system analysis
- Overview of UI systems in selected states

September 21, 2005 (Wednesday), 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Olympia

Work Session: Issues to be determined

October 5, 2005 (Wednesday), 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Olympia

Public Hearing/Work Session: Issues to be determined

October 20, 2005 (Thursday), 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Olympia

Work Session: Issues to be determined.

November 17, 2005 (Thursday), 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Olympia

Work Session:

- Issues to be determined.
- Review draft recommendations

December 1, 2005 (Thursday), 6:00 to 9:30 p.m., Olympia

Public Hearing/Work Session:

- Review draft recommendations

December 14, 2005 (Wednesday), 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Olympia

Work Session

- Review and/or approve draft report to the Legislature

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